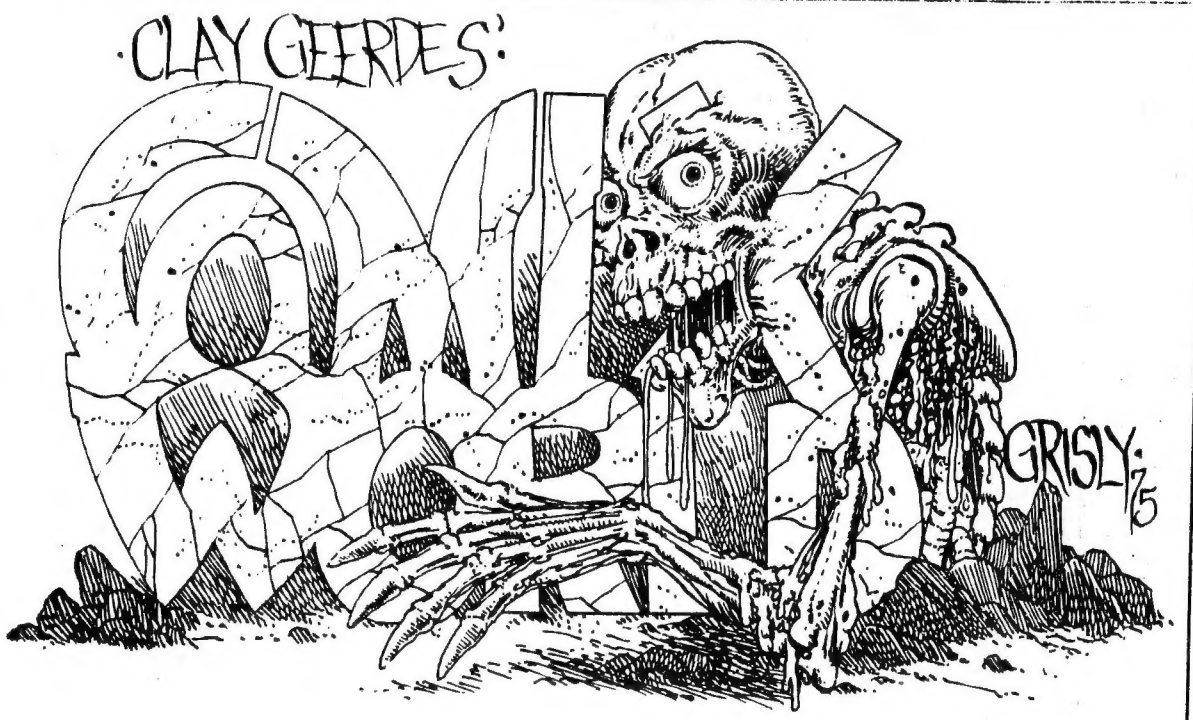
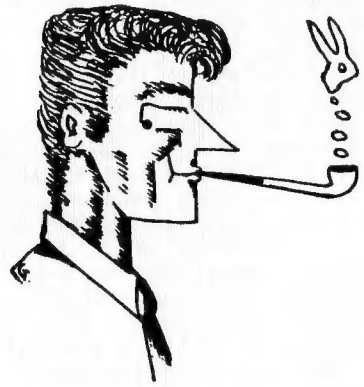


I know, Selowan, and if you do win through to become my husband's favorite daughter again, he may consent to your desires.
Mother, it's the only hope I have.

Remember, DRANOK is sworn to uphold the code of separation between we Gods and the humans. Still, I wish you luck, You must love Darkenmoor very much.
I do. And somehow I will have him...if I have to give up my immortality.
From FIRST KINGDOM 3. ©Jack Katz, 1975.

COMIX WORLD 33. Copyright Clay Geerdes, 915 Indian Rock Rd, Berkeley, Ca 94707. Oct, '75. $3 for 12 issues. Ghoulish Hallowe'en logo by TIM 'GRISLY' BOXELL, whose next comic work will appear in the new BIZARRE SEX. Tim works in animation in Minnesota and he's been writing and producing video tapes for local educational tv. Says he's done a story for a book Mike Gilbert is editing. Another tale may appear in COMIX BOOK 5 should that mag ever see print.* A note from Mike Moore who started the original L. A. Comic Book Company: "..enjoyed the Metzger article--hopefully when the real history of underground comix is written he will be recognized for the great innovator he is. A bummer to hear about Bode; says something about u.g. cartoonists though, rock stars o.d. on heroin, Bode o.d.ed on religion."* If you happen to be a hot dog fetishist, then you and Mendel Marks have something in common and he's willing to trade you his mini-comic, FRANKFURTER FUNNIES, for your drawing of a weenie. He's at P. O. Box 6593, San Francisco, Ca 94101. ACADEMICRUMB. Guess where I found part of Crumb's "Whiteman" reprinted? Between "The Social Origins of Dual Consciousness" and "The Politics of Total Cultural Experience" in Daniel Foss's FREAK CULTURE: LIFE STYLE AND POLITICS (E. P. Dutton, 1972). This is one of those turgid tomes that explains everything street folks do and take for granted in complex terminology designed to make it palatable to Deans and other polite characters who inhabit Mount Berkeley. It's further in that Lewis Yablonsky's THE HIPPIE TRIP. I can't wait to see what the sociology grad students will write about FELCH and FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE.* Jack Katz tells me his FIRST KINGDOM is being used in a class at Sonoma State College. Don't those people know it's an epic? That all 24 of those volumes won't be available until 1995? We were laughing about that over the phone. Both of us will be old men sitting in our rocking chairs when the grand finale takes place in Book XXIV!* Dave Geiser is hard at work on a 48-pager about carnival life.* Fred Todd says the Rip Off Press will be going to print with the 4th volume of the Collected Wonder Wart-Hog and Freaks 4 soon. The Shelton/Richards reinterpretation of American history is progressing nicely.* Oh, Sally the Sleuth ran as a four page spread in some issues of Spicy Mystery in the 1940's.

FREELANCING: AN ESSAY. Anyone who works on his own in this country, particularly in the creative or expressive arts, faces a lot of problems. I'm going to talk about writing, because that is what I do, but all of this applies equally to cartooning. First off, I hate being a salesman. In college, I just wrote. I kept endless journals filled with reactions to all of the various strains of philosophy that came my way in the courses I took and the discussions in which I participated in the campus commons. By the time I reached grad school at San Francisco State, I would define myself as a writer when asked by others. Invariably, the next question was, "Oh, really, what have you published?" to which I would have to reply that I had not yet been published. "Oh," they would say, giving me that look every writer and artist knows so well, the sarcastic one which typecasts the speaker as a jive artist. Publication defines a writer and an artist in America, hence one becomes hungry for exposure in print. The only greater high for a writer than his first by-line is his first publisher's check. That is the moment of truth. It says nothing about the style or the quality of the writing, because the writer may have done a job to get that initial exposure that he will never do again in his writing career. He may have written free. The underground press got a lot of freebies a few yrs back when everyone was into writing and drawing for other heads. Many of us, more sober now, realize that people like Max Scherr are still making money off our labor with never a thought to any back royalties if, indeed, there was any payment in the first place. In the late sixties, I was prone to those long sociological raps I named surrealistic pillows after the J. A. album, and Max Scherr and numerous other ug papers would pick them up and reprint them after they appeared first in the L. A. FREEP. I got $20 for those, however long they ran. I got nothing for any of the other papers. The ug syndicate had a deal that said whatever was run in one ug member paper could be reprinted free by all others. This was a good trip for publishers, and a shitty one for artists and writers. It meant the bosses could run nothing but reprinted material and collect all the ad money for themselves. Most of the offices were run by slave labor (groupies, just "doing their thing" and "learning to put out a paper.") and only a few people on any paper really knew what was going down. Photographers risked their ass to get frontline pictures during the college strikes and the People's Park war in Berkeley and the couple of bucks they got for the prints is simply a joke. In the late sixties, everybody was heavily into "doing their own thing" and for some this was simple. Give them a j and they would go and sit on Hippie Hill in the Park and blow soap bubbles all afternoon, but for others it wasn't that simple. A cartoonist has to have his ink and bristol and a photographer has to have film & paper. Unless you're a rip-off, that means the money had to come in from somewhere. In 1969, ug writers got space rates that were lower than those paid in the 1930's. Some of the ug papers were together, communal, & shared what there was in money and goods. I never had the good fortune to work with any of these. At the time, I was writing contemporary history, and that is what I have continued to do, supplementing my serious writing with enough tongue-in-cheek hack work to keep the rent up. The first phase for me was that desire for exposure, for recognition, for clippings to show my friends to prove that I was in fact a writer and not a phony. The second phase came about when I no longer cared about proving myself to others. I began to experiment with styles, to play with words. I would reconstruct the entire atmosphere of an afternoon on Haight Street by using nothing but fragments. Images of flowing red hair, beads, bells, white mini-dresses. Cockette Tajara strolling along Haight wearing nothing but a lace bedspread. Jerry Garcia standing in front of the Drogstore toking on the last of a joint that just left Pigpen's grubby hand a second before. Marty Balin, telling a small group of teenyboppers how he got started in music, under a tree on the Panhandle. Ron Thelin leaning over the counter in the Psychedelic Shop to take a handful of Oracles. "Well, look, man, if you think you've got the clap, git yore skinny ass down to the free clinic and get checked out, like you don't wanna lay a trip like that on your brothers and sisters, 'cause that would be a real bummer." Old Ukranian folks trying to decipher the lettering on a Wes Wilson poster in the window of Mnasidika. The sound of "Sunshine Superman" coming from the doorway of Wild Colors. Janis Joplin trying on a pair of sunglasses that were supposed to have belonged to Jackie Kennedy in a shop called In Gear. A little group of pilgrims getting kicked off someone's doorstep for drumming with their beer cans. Everybody wanted to make music, but only a few had any instruments and even fewer knew how to play them. Signe Anderson of The Great Society was pregnant and someone wondered if Grace Slick would work out as the new lead singer. Almost before I knew it, the books began to appear and I knew I ought to do a book, but I'm not really a book-man. I know books. By the time they appear in print (at least two years after the work is done in most cases), a writer hates his work. Like writing in general. I know what I want to write. I don't want anybody telling me it will or won't sell. I can write something commercial and sell it anytime I want to. I know the mags and the papers, their viewpoints, what they will and won't run, how long or short the pieces, and I have no feelings about commercial art or writing one way or the other. It just is. Crumb does record album covers. I review comic books. Commercial work pays the rent, but it's somewhat less than exciting. A year ago, I started reviewing books again, not because I cared that much about reviewing, but because I needed the intellectual stimulus. It's a discipline to read and review a book. You have to say something in 500 or a thousand words & you know it's just hype for the book, but there's still something there. Like working a crossword puzzle. Phase one, I got the bylines and recognition; phase two, I went anonymous and learned all of the forms (articles, reviews, short stories, columns). Oh, I got rejected a lot along the way, and sometimes it was the idea or the photos, but mostly it was because I wasn't a member of the club. As a novice, I thought it was talent. Today, I know better. Talent often keeps you out. Connections are more important. (continued in a future issue of CW)



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